

## Youth Employment Strategy Update Report

- The purpose of the paper is to update the AIC on our progress with the Youth Employment Strategy over the past year.
- The SFC now has direct responsibility for the college strand of that strategy and we report directly to the Programme Board on this work. In addition to this, we have adopted a partnership approach to contribute towards the other work streams of that strategy including that of schools, apprenticeships and employers.
- Wherever possible, we have sought to embed the expectations of the Youth Employment Strategy into our existing work to ensure it is sustainable and its outcomes can be considered alongside a wider portfolio of ambitions for the sector. Our work to progress the vision outlined in the Youth Employment Strategy has therefore been primarily driven forward through our Outcome Agreement work – specifically in relation to securing Senior Phase pathways, the promotion of STEM, evidencing employment engagement and achieving parity of outcome for all students.
- The paper evidences growth in Senior Phase pathways in the sector and highlights that indicative feedback on the outcomes of 2015-16 suggests this will continue. It also demonstrates good growth in STEM (particularly amongst females), growth in uptake from young students with a declared disability and growth in uptake from young BME students.
- The paper also outlines how we will continue to support the Youth Employment Strategy including how it could connect with the new quality arrangements proposed in the sector; our vision for all vocational courses to have work placements and our ambition to better integrate the role of university provision within these pathways.

### Recommendations

Committee is invited to:

- Note the progress made to date on our contribution to the YES and the plans for the year ahead
- Provide advice on how this could be enhanced.

### Financial implications

- There are no financial implications in this paper.



# Youth Employment Strategy Update Report

## Purpose

1. The purpose of the paper is to update the Committee on our progress with our implementation of the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy over the past year.

## Background

2. The Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce published its report in June 2014, in response the Government published its Youth Employment Strategy Developing the Young Workforce in December 2014 – we are now nearing the end of year 2 of the period of implementation of the strategy. We provided a verbal update at the last Committee meeting reported and this report serves to expand on progress over the most recent year.

## Governance

3. The work of the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) programme is overseen by a Programme Board, coordinated by a Programme Office and organised into 5 Change Themes (Schools/ Senior Phase/Colleges/ Apprenticeships and Employers). Recognising the appropriateness and maturity of arrangements the Scottish Government transferred responsibility for Change Theme 3 lead to SFC in March 2016.
4. SFC now reports directly to the Programme Board, which has enhanced reporting arrangements. We also work closely with Change Theme 2 colleagues in considering the colleges' contribution to the Senior Phase and across the Apprenticeship and Employer engagement work streams. To further develop the joint agency response to the work plan of Change Theme 3 we have established a Change Theme 3 Review group with SDS.
5. The work of SFC in implementing the YES is a broad response and cuts across the organisation requiring close integration and joint working. Our main areas of work include: Improving the Outcome Agreement process, developing senior phase vocational pathways, ensuring a primary focus on employer engagement, Promoting STEM, employer engagement, and Equalities (specifically gender imbalance and other protected characteristic groups such as BME and young disabled).
6. Since inheriting the Change Theme 3 Plan we have reviewed it clarifying milestones and timelines to take into account recent developments, planning meetings with stakeholders and the changing context. An outline of proposed changes has been shared with the Programme Office, an updated plan is currently being finalised.

7. This report provides an outline of the key developments and achievements made in the past year and an indication of challenges remaining and plans for the year ahead.

### **Senior phase vocational pathways**

8. Using the Early Adopter Programme in AY 2014-15 as a catalyst, SFC has overseen and coordinated the college sector response to the YES agenda. College regions have responded effectively and in close cooperation for the most part with regional partners to increase the volume of senior phase vocational pathways on offer and shifted their emphasis of school college delivery to higher level SCQF provision of more substantial (group award) nature.
9. The final evaluation of the Early Adopters was published in July 2016, re-emphasising messages from the interim report around the importance of strategic regional partnership working, the role of regional co-ordinators and employer engagement. Key challenges identified included the need to create a structure within school timetables to promote student engagement with college opportunities, the importance of employer engagement, an approach to partnership working that is systemic and embedded and the importance of both growing pathways but also cultivating demand from pupils, parents and teachers.
10. Within this expansion and drive to ensure that all schools in Scotland have a vocational offer, equalities are being addressed and early signs are that progress is being made in encouraging more young females onto STEM courses and also to increase the number of BME learners.
11. Our attention going forward will focus more sharply on outcomes to include course retention rates and also destinations for senior phase learners. Senior phase pathways were a key element of the recently published College Leaver Destination Survey report. We will also begin to compare projected places offered against uptake, to uncover and support particular challenges around demand.
12. Reviewing our figures for AY 2013-14 and 2014-15 we can see a trend of an increasing uptake of senior phase vocational courses. We do not have final figures for 2015-16 however an early review of 2015-16 undertaken in partnership with our college regions suggested this trend is continuing.
13. College data for AY14-15 shows that:
  - There were 2,384 enrolments compared to 2,169 in 2013-14, an increase of 9%. This translates to a headcount of 2,336 in 2014-15, a 10% increase from 2013-14 (2,127).

- 63.3% completed successfully in 2014-15, compared to 65.4% in 2013-14.
  - 626 of these enrolments were on STEM courses (26%) compared to 244, an increase of 157%
  - 363 of these enrolments had a declared disability (15%) compared to 306, an increase of 19%
  - Enrolments from BME pupils increased from 27 to 63, an increase of 133%
  - The proportion of female pupils on STEM courses has increased from 19.3% to 26.4%.
14. For 2015-16 an earlier estimate showed an increase in enrolments (a total of 2,452 enrolments reported by February compared to 2,118 in 2014-15 an increase of 16%). More of the enrolments are by BME and disabled learners.
  15. Based on feedback and early review of data some regions appear to have lower enrolment levels for higher level provision and we expect these, in part, to reflect the challenges of recruitment and capacity. There is a need for regional partnerships to both enhance senior phase vocational delivery arrangements including improving the parent/pupil/teacher understanding of courses and demand.
  16. We also estimate an increase in the proportion of higher level college courses made available in the senior phase. Nationally the following qualifications make up the majority of provision Skills for Work (13%), Intermediate 2 Group Awards (13%), HNC (11%) and HN Units (7%). The most common subject groupings for provision were Health (19%) and Social Studies (26%).
  17. SFC requested college regions to provide information on their projected levels of senior phase vocational delivery for AY 2016-17. Regions have outlined within their OAs for 2016-17 their commitment to this area in relation to the percentage of Senior Phase Vocational provision and enrolments. To compliment that information and to add further detail we collected projection data similar to previous years but linked closer to the OA measure for Senior Phase Vocational Pathways established for 16-17 Outcome Agreements<sup>1</sup>.
  18. At this stage College regions are forecasting to deliver over 400 courses to more than 4028 pupils across all 32 local authorities with 259 schools<sup>2</sup>. The forecasts reflect activity that is closer rooted to a new OA measure specifically for the Senior phase activity and therefore provides a clearer basis for baselining for future comparison.

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<sup>1</sup> Provision at SCQF Level 5 and above provision to S4-6 pupils with a vocational qualification aim of HNQ, NC, SVQ, NPA or Skills for Work

<sup>2</sup> Forecasts for Borders and Ayrshire and Dundee and Angus to be confirmed

19. To assist with the process of understanding senior phase expansion we have developed tools to utilise in year data, both to help capture projections for recruitment and also more real time recruitment estimates in advance of audited data returns. This has enabled us to account for progress to the Programme Board and will benefit the level of support we can offer regions in understanding their demand comparative to the rest of Scotland and to assist us to forecast national growth in this area.
20. At the attached Annex is the '*Developing strategic partnerships across local authorities and college regions to grow senior phase pathways*' report, produced by Scottish Government and Education Scotland, which provides a summary of themes emerging from discussions with strategic leaders.

### **College leaver destination survey**

21. We published the College Leaver Destination Survey in October 2016 for AY 2014-15, destinations were known for 86.9% of the YES cohort- 16-24 year old leavers, out of a total of 35,111 leavers. Of these, 14.7% progressed into work. In terms of YES KPI 4, **82.9%** of 16-24 year olds (for whom destinations were confirmed) progressed either to higher study, training, work or modern apprenticeships.

### **Equalities and Gender Action**

22. Priorities identified through the Gender Action Plan published this summer are reflected in the College OA Guidance for 2017-18. There will be associated regional priorities for colleges dependent on their most imbalanced subjects. To date colleges have demonstrated positive action and effort to tackle gender imbalance on senior phase pathways.
23. Over the coming year, all institutions will be asked to set out how they will work to achieve the aims of the Gender Action Plan by enhancing their activity and impact within each of the following five areas, as identified by SFC commissioned research to underpin the GAP:
  - Infrastructure
  - Influencing the influencers
  - Raising awareness and aspiration
  - Encouraging applications
  - Supporting success.
24. There are a range of subject specific actions and a heavy emphasis on actions to enhance partnership working from early years throughout education and into employment.

### ***Young disabled, care experienced and BME***

25. We are responding to the expectations around the Senior Phase for the young disabled, care experience and BME through the work supported and agreed by the AIC. This includes the:
  - Access and Inclusion Approach now embedded in College Outcome Agreement Guidance for 2017-20
  - Work presented to the AIC at our last meeting on BME and agreement for us to develop this and feed it into the Scottish Government's Framework for Race Equality
  - National Ambition for Care Experienced Students embedded in the College and University Outcome Agreement Guidance from 2015 onwards.
26. In addition to this, a key component of Outcome Agreements is for colleges and universities to evidence they have been Equality Impact Assessed.

### **Improving Outcome Agreements**

27. Working with Scottish Government we are in the process of finalising a framework for reviewing OAs. This should serve to capture the full extent of colleges' response to the YES and other priorities and enhance our feedback mechanisms to improve draft Outcome Agreements.
28. A key focus of the work to enhance college outcome agreements has been the Action Learning Pilots and the ongoing process of integrating quality systems within the Outcome Agreement process. The Senior Phase pathways will be a key component of this. The College Outcome Agreement Guidance for AY 17-20 signals the direction of travel with an integration of the two systems with national roll out.

### **STEM**

29. For AY 2016-17 we introduced a STEM measure into the Outcome Agreement Guidance and are working to assess STEM demand with college regions. Through the 2017-20 College Outcome Agreement Guidance we will seek evidence that college regions are meeting STEM demand, have made an assessment of this and have clear STEM strategies in place – ensuring the right provision is in place. We are also working with partners to support the development of a national STEM Strategy including input to the now published Scottish Government STEM Strategy Consultation.

### **Employer engagement**

30. We want to see all vocational courses in colleges offering work placements, increasing over time to all FT courses. To support this aspiration and enhance

quality placement opportunities for learners we have worked closely with stakeholders to develop a Work Placement Standard. This was published on 29 September by Jamie Hepburn Minister for Employability and Training.

31. As part of a broader strategy to promote employer engagement with colleges, and work to measure this across regions we will also work to evidence CPP engagement with colleges and capture feedback on CPP engagement in the OA development process.
32. It is anticipated that through the new college quality arrangements being introduced in AY 16-17 we will seek evidence of how colleges are implementing the new standard across their provision.

### **Funding**

33. £1.5M additional investment in college regions in AY 2015-16 supported new promotional activity to tackle perceived gendered decision making; supported joint CPD between lecturers and teachers; helped coordinate activity to better promote vocational pathways to pupils and key stakeholders for 2016-17 recruitment. Colleges reported on the impact of this funding as part of their 2015-16 OA Self evaluations in October 2016. We are in the process of considering these and an update will be provided to the committee in due course.

### **Future Plans**

- We will continue to enhance our data collection systems to support the growth of senior phase pathways including foundation apprenticeships and will seek to promote and disseminate good practice in the sector
- We will implement a new OA led quality system
- We will forge closer working relationships with colleagues in the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate to identify opportunities for Joint leadership and CPD of teachers and college staff
- We will disseminate the key messages and findings from the YES funding and in particular any learning around generating demand and supporting parents/ pupils and teachers in forming subject choices
- We will prioritise STEM both in pathways and in college curriculum provision, to seek to map current pathways and identify any gaps.
- We will work to promote university integration within pathway development, including the option of graduate apprenticeships
- In developing our work on equalities we will consider each colleges

Equalities Impact Assessments of OAs alongside our own assessment of our Outcome Agreement Guidance and funding

- We will continue to consider Senior Phase commitments within our access work on disabilities, care experience, gender and race.

### **Equality and diversity assessment**

34. Equality issues feature prominently within the work on the YES, there are specific strands of work looking at gender imbalance, race, disability and other special interest groups such as care experienced.

### **Recommendations**

35. The Committee is invited to:
- Note the progress made to date on our contribution to the YES and the plans for the year ahead
  - Provide advice on how this could be enhanced.

### **Publication**

36. This paper will be published on the Council website.

### **Further information**

37. Contact: Seamus Spencer, Outcome Agreement Manager/Youth Employment Strategy Lead tel: 0131 313 6673, email: [spencer@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:spencer@sfc.ac.uk) .